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Records Center

The President's Daily Brief

11 September 1971

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~~Top Secret~~

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

11 September 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The latest information on the floods in North Vietnam is on *Page 1*.

Cambodia's elitist military force, the Khmer Krom, is moving toward a semiautonomous status within the army, reversing earlier government policy aimed at its integration. *(Page 2)*

Turkish Cyprus. *(Page 3)* 50X1

British Persian Gulf *(Page 4)* 50X6

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NORTH VIETNAM

Photography of 3 September shows flood waters receding from the region northeast of Hanoi, but much land is still inundated. [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] rail traffic from Communist 50X1
China to Hanoi resumed about 1 September, after approximately ten days of inactivity due to the high waters. Despite public acknowledgment that further flooding could take place this month, a period of usually heavy rains, the Council of Ministers has ordered that crops be replanted immediately after the floods recede. The government has said that the "majority" of rice fields have been washed out, and there is concern about the sufficiency of seeds for replanting. Stockpiles of materials for repairing levees are running short; however, this problem may be relieved with the arrival of supplies now en route from North Vietnam's allies.

The army has ordered all but combat units to repair dikes and dams, to assist the people in making their homes habitable, and to take preventive steps against disease. Meanwhile, military supplies continue to be moved south in preparation for the usual dry-season efforts to supply enemy forces in South Vietnam.

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CAMBODIA

Lon Nol has authorized the formation of a high-level "committee" to coordinate and oversee the operations of the Khmer Krom--the elitist military force which is built around ethnic Cambodians from South Vietnam. The committee is headed by a prominent Khmer Krom civilian, but all other key positions are held by Khmer Krom commanders.

The committee evidently is meant to be the staff organization for some 14 Khmer Krom infantry brigades in Cambodia and brings those units toward a semiautonomous status within the Cambodian Army, reversing earlier government policy aimed at their integration. The committee apparently was set up to alleviate the concern of Khmer Krom officers over alleged serious shortcomings in Cambodia's use of their units, including lack of operational planning, poor logistic support, and the failure to clamp down on corruption.

Lon Nol presumably believes that by giving Khmer Krom units such a wide measure of military independence he is ensuring that he will retain their political support. These units are the government's most effective fighting force and could strengthen Lon Nol's hand if he should decide to resist pressure on him to give up an active role in the government.

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TURKEY-CYPRUS

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UK - PERSIAN GULF

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NOTE

Finland-Germany: The four-power agreement on Berlin, though not yet consummated, may already have encouraged Finnish President Kekkonen to rethink his government's position on recognizing East Germany. The Finnish ambassador to the US has indicated that Kekkonen will in a speech today announce "a proposal" concerning recognition of both German states. The Finns are particularly sensitive to Soviet wishes and are anxious to host a Conference on European Security. A precipitous action by Helsinki would have its effect on other Nordic and neutral states that may already be leaning in the direction of recognizing East Germany. Any important Finnish move, moreover, would place pressure on the Brandt government to reach a rapid accommodation with East Germany, enhance the credibility of the domestic opponents of Brandt's Ostpolitik, and thus increase the vulnerability of the Social Democratic - Free Democratic government.

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